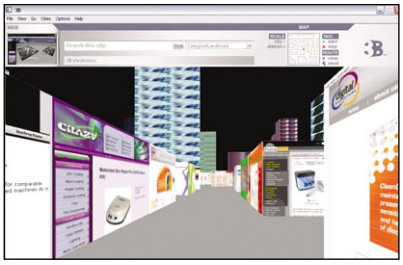
Compiled by Kevin Savetz

3D Browsing

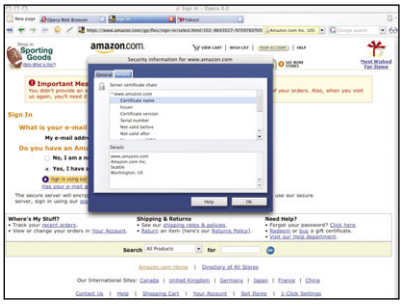
A new Web browser, dubbed 3B (free; www.3b.net), aims to dramatically change the way people use the Web by putting the "browse" back in browser. The program uses a 3D interface to let you walk amongst Web sites: The result looks more like a first-person shooter than a traditional Web browser. The Windows-only browser divides the Web into "cities" aimed at particular demographics such as women, urban life, and vacation planners. The software's maker also lets Web site owners build their own cities. It's an interesting concept, but the program boxes you in to preselected Web sites, so somehow we don't think that Firefox and Internet Explorer have much to worry about from this new competition. ▲



3B makes browsing the Web more like exploring a 3D shopping mall.

Plain, Ol' Browsing, But Cool Updates

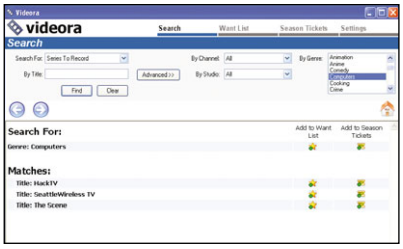
If you prefer a more mainstream browser, Opera version 8 ($39; www.opera.com) is worth checking out. Available for Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux, the program adds a unique security information field that indicates the trustworthiness of banking and shopping sites. Voice integration lets users control the browser with voice commands and reads Web pages' content aloud. A new page-resizing function adapts Web pages to fit the width of any window. The program continues to offer powerful features that make it a favorite among power users, including support for mouse gestures, tabbed browsing, and the ability to save browsing sessions. ▲



Videora combines BitTorrent with RSS for easier video downloads.

Find TV On Your PC

So you missed last night's episode of "Lost"—now what? Sure, you might be able to download it with BitTorrent, but navigating the slow, ad-infested Torrent tracker sites can be a hassle. Smart developers are making it easier to find and download television shows. Videora (www.videora.com) combines BitTorrent and RSS to automatically find and download the videos that you want to see. The program was designed to let you download anime, video clips, and other legal content sources, but we were able to find episodes of "Desperate Housewives," "The Simpsons," and other mainstream TV. Videora costs $22.95, and a free trial version is available. ▲



Opera 8's security features let you verify the privacy of the data you transmit.

Hello, Windows Mobile 5.0

Microsoft has updated its OS for portable devices. Windows Mobile 5.0 (www.microsoft.com/windowsmobile/5/default.mspx) runs on both PDAs and mobile phones, replacing Microsoft's Pocket PC moniker for its PDA OS and the Smartphone brand for mobile phones. Windows Mobile 5.0 adds a PowerPoint viewer, support for internal hard drives, better Bluetooth compatibility, and improved support for digital cameras and other hardware. ▲

Sweet Office Suite

Corel WordPerfect Office 12 Small Business Edition ($349; www.wordperfect.com) is taking on the Microsoft Office behemoth. The suite includes a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation app, photo editor, and security software. The new version adds a new email application, which includes a shared calendar, spam blocker, and RSS viewer. The package also includes the Paint Shop Pro 9 image editor and Quattro Pro 12 spreadsheet application. ▲

Keep Prying Eyes Out

Whether you're keeping trade secrets on your laptop or just don't want your spouse to find your secret birthday shopping list, strong encryption is essential to keeping prying eyes out of your PC. A new version of Steganos Safe ($29.95; www.steganos.com) provides 256-bit AES protection and a secure file shredder. It also makes it easy to take your encrypted data with you by saving it directly to a USB memory stick, digital camera memory, or cell phone. ▲

MP3s & Music

If your meager MP3 collection consists only of a handful of hits from the '80s, Indy (free; indy.tv) can help you discover new music that you'll love. When you launch the program, it quickly downloads and begins playing music from an eclectic mix of independent artists. As you listen give the songs a rating on a scale from one to five stars. The program uses collaborative filtering to figure out what other music you're likely to enjoy. After just a little while, you'll have a directory full of MP3s that you'll love. The program is available for both Mac OS and Windows.

On the other hand, if your MP3 collection is out of control, Magix mp3 maker 10 deLuxe ($29.99; www.magix.com) can help tame it. The program's music organization tools include the ability to repair MP3 files and convert all of your files to your preferred format (including Ogg Vorbis, AAC, and mp3PRO). The program also supports Windows Media DRM, making it possible to play, archive, copy, and burn files that you've downloaded from many online music stores. The auto backup feature can automatically save your entire music collection to CD or DVD. ▲

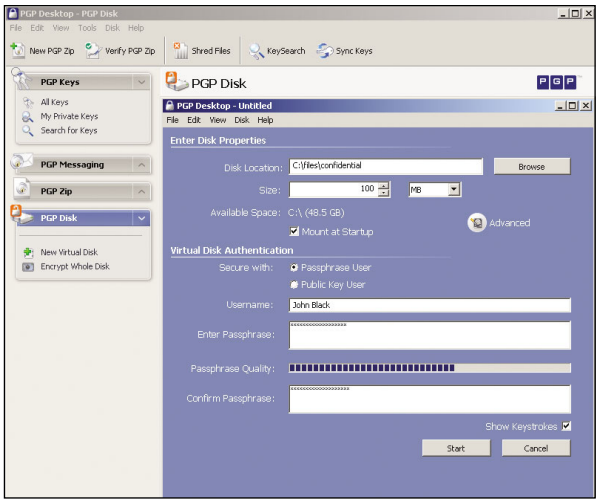
Behind Indy's simple interface is an intelligent filtering system that can figure out your musical tastes.

Wi-Fi Finder

Many cities offer hundreds of free Wi-Fi hotspots, which are great for a quick email fix when you're on the road, but finding a strong and unsecured signal can be a chore. Wi-Fi Companion for Pocket PCs ($24.99; www.socketcom.com) makes it easier to find reliable hotspots with your Pocket PC. The application determines the presence and strength of wireless coverage, whether security is enabled, and the type of encryption used. Once you're connected its ping and traceroute tools let you check the speed and latency of the connection. ▲

Virtual Disk

PGP has also released a new version of its powerful encryption software, PGP Desktop Home 9.0 ($69; www.pgp.com). Aimed at home users and home businesses that use an ISP for email, the program includes five encryption tools for securing private email, selected files, and AOL Instant Messenger traffic. The PGP Virtual Disk software lets users create an encrypted partition, the contents of which are gibberish to anyone who doesn't have the proper password. ▲



Virtual Disk, part of PGP Desktop Home 9.0, can encrypt and password protect a directory full of files.

BIOS Upgrades Available Online

Compiled by Kevin Savetz

Before you send another motherboard to the landfill, consider upgrading the BIOS and giving your PC a new outlook on life. Here are a few recently released upgrades. Readers can check out www.cpumag.com/cpujul05/bios to see our entire upgrade list.

Motherboard	Date Available	URL
ABIT IS-10	05/04/2005	www.abit-usa.com/downloads/bios/bios_revision.php?categories=1&model=137
AOpen i915Gm-PL	05/06/2005	download.aopen.com.tw/userdownload_List.aspx?RecNo=9039&Model=i915Gm-PL
Biostar U8668 D	04/12/2005	www.biostar-usa.com/mbdownloads.asp?model=u8668+d
ECS 661FX-M7	05/06/2005	www.ecsusa.com/downloads/downloads_main.cfm?to=Motherboard
GIGABYTE GA-K8NSC-939	05/06/2005	tw.giga-byte.com/Motherboard/Support/BIOS/BIOS_GA-K8NSC-939.htm
Intel D925XEBC2	05/10/2005	www.intel.com/design/motherbd/bc2/bc2_bios.htm